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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 8953

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: LOWER HOUSE ELECTION: BINH LONG

REF: SAIGON 5960

1. NAME AND OCCUPATIONS OF THE 12 CANDIDATES WHO INITIALLY FILED FOR THE SINGLE BINH LONG LOWER HOUSE SEAT WERE REPORTED REFTEL. THREE CANDIDATES, LAM PHUOC CUONG, THE PROVINCIAL LABOR SERVICE CHIEF, PHAM VAN HOA, PROVINCE COUNCIL CO
URMAN, AND TON TRUONG NGUWO, A SAIGON JOURNALIST, WITHDREW. HOA IS SAID TO HAVE DECIDED HIS CANDIDACY WAS HOPELESS AND CUONG TO HAVE JOINED THE ARMY.

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2. FOUR SOLDIERS AND FIVE CIVILIANS, FOUR OF WHOM ARE CIVIL SERVANTS, REMAIN IN THE RACE. VOTERS NUMBER ONLY 28,218 INCLUDING 5,154 SOLDIERS AND DEPENDENTS AND 3,265 MONTAGNARDS, MOSTLY STIENG OR STIENG-CAMBODIAN. MILITARY VOTE, ESPECIALLY VOTES OF TWO BATTALIONS OF ARVN 9TH REGIMENT (ARVN 5TH DIVISION) STATIONED IN PROVINCE, THUS IMPORTANT. ONLY OTHER POTENTIAL BLOC VOTE IS THAT OF THE SEVERAL THOUSAND RUBBER PLANTATION WORKERS, OVERWHELMINGLY NORTHERN IN ORIGIN AND CATHOLIC; THEIR RESIDENCE IN BINH LONG DATES BACK SOME THIRTY YEARS.

3. CANDIDATE TO BEAT SAID TO BE ARVN LT COL DUONG VAN THUY, A NATIVE OF THUA THIEN PROVINCE, NOW ASSIGNED TO III CTZ HEADQUARTERS STAFF. THUY IS WELL-REMEMBERED AS AN EXCELLENT PROVINCE CHIEF; HE PRECEDED INCUMBENT LT COL LO CONG DANH. VIETNAMESE SOURCES SAY THAT THUY IS VERY MUCH A MAN OF THE PEOPLE. THEY SAY HE IS WIDELY KNOWN AND LIKED. THUY HAS CAMPAIGNED HARD, DEPENDING ON HIS PERSONALITY AND REPUTATIION RATHER THAN CAMPAIGN PROMISES TO WIN HIM VOTES. ALTHOUGH A BUDDHIST, HE IS SAID TO HAVE WON THE SUPPORT OF A NUMBER OF CATHOLIC PRIESTS. PROVINCE CHIEF DANH AND THE 9TH REGIMENT COMMANDER ARE SAID TO BE IN THUY'S CAMP.

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4. PROVINCIAL SOURCES SAY THAT ONLY CANDIDATE WITH A CHANCE OF BEATING THUY IS PHUNG HUU SUU, AN OFFICIAL OF THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS. SUU SERVED IN BINH LONG TWO YEARS AGO AS YOUTH CHIEF. SUU IS A NORTHERN CATHOLIC AND HAS ENDORSEMENT OF GREATER SOLIDARITY FORCES. HE PLACED A CLOSE SECOND IN THE BINH LONG CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY RACE LAST YEAR RECEIVING HEAVY VOTE FROM RUBBER WORKERS. IN ADDITION, SUU ENJOYS SUPPORT OF MANY OF YOUGER CIVIL SERVANTS AND PROVINCIAL INTELLIGENTSIA, WHO REGARD HIM AS MORE QUALIFIED TO SERVE IN LOWER HOUSE THAN THUY.

5. MAJOR LYTRONG LE, THE PROVINCE'S CA DEPUTY, IS THOUGHT TO HAVE WON ON THE STRENGTH OF PROVINCIAL GVN AND 9TH REGIMENT SUPPORT A YEAR AGO. RUMORS HAVE BEEN CURRENT IN BINH LONG

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THAT HIS ELECTION LAST YEAR WAS RIGGED. LE IS ROUNDLY CRITICIZED FOR FAILING TO FULFILL HIS PROMISE TO HAVE PROVINCIAL LIFELINE, NATIONAL ROUTE 13, REPAIRED AND ALSO FOR FACT THAT AFTER ELECTION TO CA HE DID NOT RETURN TO PROVINCE A SINGLE TIME. THIS TIME DESPITE ENDORSEMENT FARMER-WORKER-LABOR GROUP OF GENERAL TRAN VAN DON, HE IS GIVEN LITTLE CHANCE OF WINNING.

6. PROVINCE SKEPTICS HAVE A WARY EYE ON FIRST LIEUTENANT DUONG HONG HUAN, AN ARVN DOCTOR. HUAN IS YOUNGER BROTHER OF

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COL. DUONG HONG TUAN, AS ASSISTANT TO PRIME MINISTER KY. VIRTUALLY UNKNOWN IN THE PROVINCE, HE IS REPORTED TO BE AIMING HIS CAMPAIGN AT WOMEN AND OLDER PEOPLE.

7. NGUYEN TRI QUI, PRINCIPAL OF THE BINH LONG HIGH SCHOOL, IS THEONLY CANDIDATE WITH "A GOOD REVOLUTIONARY BACKGROUN." QUE SUPPORTED THE VIET MINH AND WAS IMPRISIONED BY THE FRENCH FOR EIGTH YEARS.

8. THE REAMINING FOUR CANDIDATES, DOAN VAN PHU, SCHOOL SUPERVISOR WHO HAS CVT ENDORSEMENT, PRINVE VIS CHIEF NGUYEN TRUNG HA, PROVINCE COUNCIL SECRETARY NGUYEN NHU CUU AND RETIRED ARVN OFFICER DOAN TRUNG NGHIA, ARE SAID TO BE CERTAIN ALSO-RANS.
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